

Opinion

Accessing private information

Personal privacy is a triggering issue for most Americans. They don't want the government, business or people they don't know to go rooting around their lives.

The privacy issue takes on a different face when it comes to a loved one, especially when technology, such as cellphones and computers, is involved.

In cases of death, getting access to information is vital to executors of wills and survivors. Unfortunately, passwords for phones, computers and other devices are not always shared with family members. There is information that is important for survivors to access and finalize the affairs of their loved one.

Information regarding financial accounts, on-going payments and more can be locked away forever without the cooperation of the companies that maintain cellphones and online accounts such as social media sites. Without a password, survivors are locked out of accessing information.

Providing access to secure accounts is not an easy step. Companies must manage their liability, they cannot just open accounts to those who say they are survivors. There has to be stringent steps to assure that those gaining access are the ones who, without question, have the right to access.

Ideally, spouses would share their passwords. Barring that, one option is to legislate who, and how, someone gets access to a deceased person's private information.

Any legislation would have to be written succinctly including providing immunity from civil action to companies that provide access on good faith. No amount of legislation can account for the actions of humans. Things never get so complicated and irrational as when a person passes.

The death of a spouse or loved one is devastating enough without the added complications of trying to wrap up their lives.

— LAZ

our
opinion

Sanctuary America?

The star of the first Democratic presidential primary debate, Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., was attorney general of California and, before that, district attorney for San Francisco. This put her in the vanguard of the Golden State's sanctuary state and sanctuary city policies.

Now, it seems, all the 2020 Democratic hopefuls—and Harris in particular—are trying to turn the United States into one big sanctuary country where crossing the border illegally is analogous to jaywalking.

That's why all 10 Democrats raised their hands Thursday night when asked if they wanted to make crossing the border without documentation a civil rather than criminal offense. They all also raised their hands when asked if they wanted to provide health care to unauthorized immigrants.

During the debate, Harris framed the practice of shielding undocumented immigrants from federal immigration enforcement this way: "I know it as a prosecutor. I want a rape victim to be able to run in the middle of -- to run in the middle of the street and wave down a police officer and report the crime against her."

It was a variation of an argument crafted earlier by Sen. Dianne Feinstein, who as mayor of San Francisco pushed through the city's first sanctuary policy in 1985. It applied to undocumented migrants from El Salvador and Guatemala. The law, expanded to all undocumented immigrants by city voters in 1989, would make San Francisco safer, DiFi argued, because undocumented residents would not be afraid to report crimes to city police.

But as the policy expanded, it didn't just protect otherwise law-abiding immigrants—hard-working adults who came here to work and raise a family. It also has shielded gang members and criminals who harm women and children, as Harris well knows.

San Francisco's 2013 Due Process for All ordinance prohibited local law enforcement from holding unauthorized immigrants for federal immigration officials unless the inmate had been convicted of a violent felony in the past seven years. What could go wrong? Many a career car thief or repeat drug offender has enjoyed the same protection as the rape victim Harris said she wanted to protect.

The most famous beneficiary was Jose Ines Garcia Zarate. After he served

time for his seventh felony drug conviction, the feds sent Garcia Zarate to San Francisco on a 20-year-old marijuana charge. The district attorney inevitably did not pursue the moldy case, and so Garcia Zarate walked out on the street, where he found a gun used to kill Kate Steinle on a summer evening in 2015.

Please tell me: What country passes laws to protect career criminals and repeat offenders from being deported?

In his first term, President Barack Obama had a smarter take when he directed federal officials to target unauthorized immigrants who were "violent offenders and people convicted of crimes."

He expanded the Secure Communities program, piloted by President George W. Bush, which cross-checked fingerprints taken at local jails with immigration databases. It was a smart plan. In fiscal 2013, The Los Angeles Times reported, 82% of deported individuals had been convicted of a crime.

During the debate, however, Harris railed against Obama's use of Secure Communities because, well, "The policy was to allow deportation of people who by ICE's own definition were non-criminals." (Actually, that's also the definition of Thursday night's debate team, as they all said they'd like to make unauthorized border crossing a civil offense instead of a crime.)

Mark Krikorian of the pro-enforcement Center for Immigration Studies observed that Harris referred to rape as a "real crime":

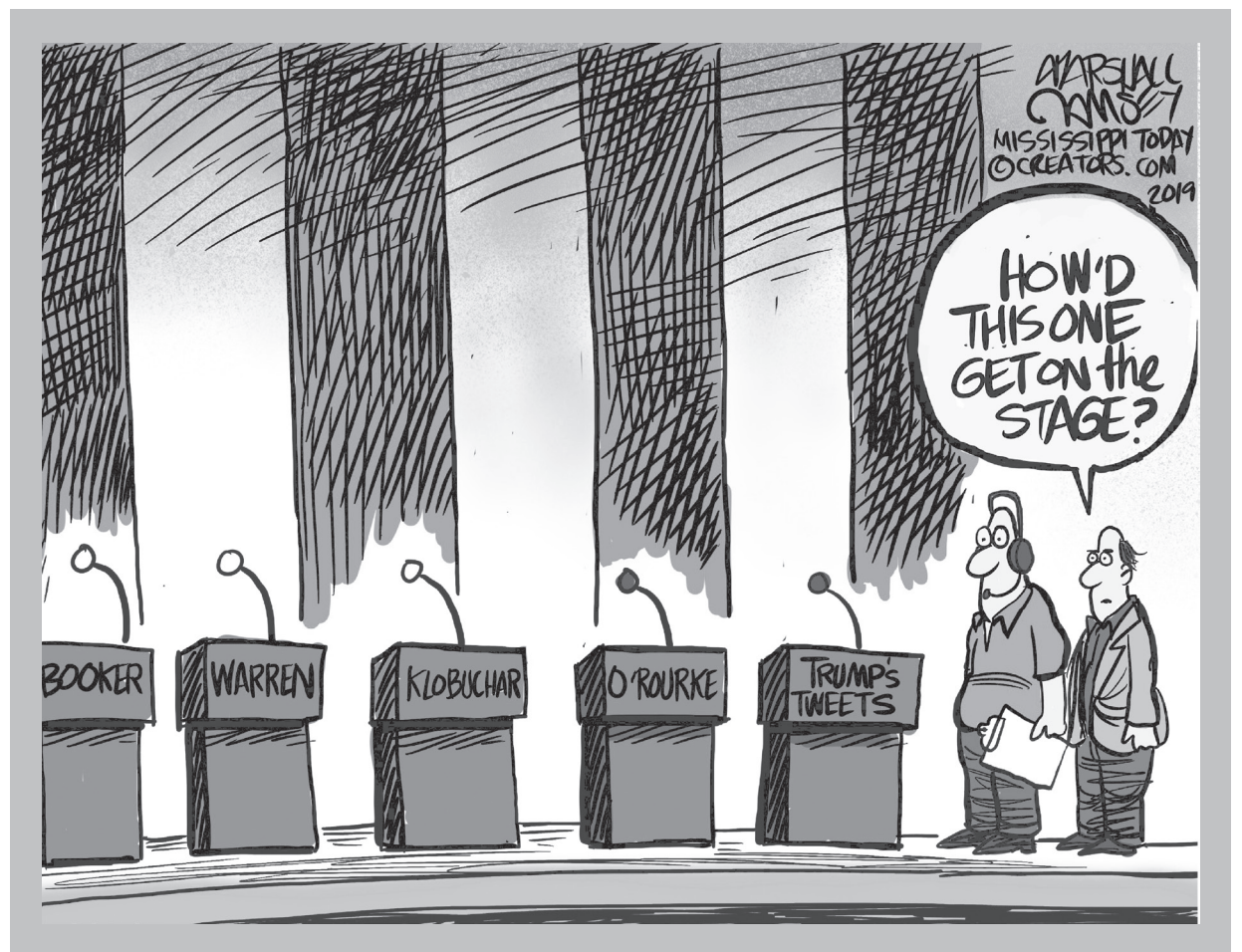
"That's a standard sanctuary city line," says Krikorian. "At this point, it's now Democratic Party orthodoxy that only people that have broken 'real' laws should be subject to deportation."

And those crimes would have to be tried and convicted and have been committed recently to warrant removal. The "tool in the toolbox" of being able to deport an undesirable newcomer who's not supposed to be in the United States in the first place, Krikorian warned, would disappear.

What would happen if Democrats were to end criminal penalties for crossing the border? Does anyone think there would be fewer unauthorized immigrants or more? And would they be more law-abiding otherwise or less?

(Creators Syndicate)

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Endless self-regard on world stage

By MICHAEL GERSON

I worked for a leader who was sometimes accused of lacking in the smarts department. But no one I know who spent time with President George W. Bush was left with that impression.

Bush took an almost gleeful satisfaction in picking holes in arguments, as any half-prepared briefer quickly learned. He was also an avid reader of history. (I remember him passing along to me *Judgment Days: Lyndon Baines Johnson, Martin Luther King Jr. and the Laws That Changed America* and *A Godly Hero: The Life of William Jennings Bryan* after he had finished with them.)

Most important to Bush's political rise, he has a remarkable facility for reading the emotional contours of small groups. If someone is feeling ignored or reluctant to contribute a relevant point, Bush zeroes in to make him or her feel comfortable and included. During the 2000 campaign, I recall a briefing on humanitarian military interventions, attended by all of Bush's first-string foreign policy advisers. Not being one of them, I was seated at the periphery, in a chair with my back to the wall, trying to avoid notice. About halfway through the meeting, Bush paused and said to the group: "You know what I'd really like to know? I'd like to know what Mike Gerson thinks about this." I sputtered something so forgettable that I have forgotten it. But the memory of feeling valued remains.

People close to President Trump may well have similar stories of unsuspected sharpness and acumen. But if this is a secret, it is a well-kept one. Trump has said he has no

time to read. "I never have," he said in 2016. "I'm always busy doing a lot." People who brief him report a gnat-like attention span. Trump's frequent accusation that others are stupid or "low IQ" sits uncomfortably with his own shocking ignorance of history, science and economics. Most recently, he seemed to understand "Western-style liberalism" as local governance in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Asked his view of busing, he judged it "a primary method of getting people to schools."

Does presidential ignorance matter? A few presidents—like Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln—rose through the power of brilliant writing and rhetoric. Ulysses S. Grant wrote a memoir of enduring literary value. The 1912 presidential election pitted the author of *The Naval War of 1812: A Complete History* (Teddy Roosevelt) against the author of *Congressional Government: A Study in American Government* (Woodrow Wilson).

There is not, of course, a necessary connection between brilliance and judgment. And it is true that writers tend (sometimes unfairly) to prefer the kind of intelligence expressed in writing. That said, it is evident that Trump's combination of ignorance and arrogance exposes the United States to needless global ridicule. His misunderstanding of basic economics—particularly his insistence that China will pay tariffs rather than U.S. consumers—has led to bad and dangerous trade policy. But Trump's most consequential deficit may lie in his emotional intelligence—what political scientist Joseph Nye defines as "the self-mastery, discipline

and empathic capacity that allows leaders to channel their personal passions and attract others."

This ground is also covered by the term "temperament." And we are seeing what happens when presidential temperament is entirely absent. Trump's lack of self-mastery often makes his interventions in foreign and domestic policy spasmodic and unstrategic. His incapacity for empathy results in cruelty—see the migrant children at the border—that strikes at the moral core of American greatness. Trump is unable to find any value in the views of a political opponent, which puts both national healing and useful compromise beyond his abilities. He is only capable of governing on behalf of those who support him, making him vulnerable to manipulation through flattery.

This is bad enough in the context of American politics. It is worse on a global scale. Ultimately, the lack of presidential temperament leaves Trump unable to distinguish between American friends and autocratic rivals who play on his own vanity. And this allows strongmen such as Russian President Vladimir Putin and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to murder, intimidate and attack Western liberalism under the protective cover of Trump's narcissism.

This is a more disturbing matter than gaps in the president's knowledge. Those who dismiss the importance of presidential temperament must reckon with the fact that Trump's endless self-regard is being exploited—and easily exploited—to undermine the interests of the United States.

(Washington Post Writers Group)

other
voices

Are we lurching toward war?

We've been at war with other countries over the last sixty years where outcomes have not been as predicted and promises unfulfilled. They have brought huge losses in military and collateral lives and devastated our treasury. Meanwhile, needs at home go unattended. Objective observers promise that a war with Iran will be quite different from those with Iraq, Libya, Somalia and Afghanistan.

The biggest difference is where a loss for us could be the outcome. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has remarked that it would "only" take 2,000 air strikes to eliminate Iran's nuclear facilities. He sees it as "easy" to place 20,000 Marines on the northern coast of the Persian Gulf to secure the Strait of Hormuz although U.S. forces would face 1.7 million Iranian regulars and militia. Pompeo is confident the U.S. Navy can cope with literally thousands of supersonic missiles fired at our ships. Then there are the S-300 missiles Iran now operationally owns.

Of course, the U.S. could use nuclear weapons to kill every man, woman and child in Iran. That would add up to about 80 million of them and a U.S. reputation for use of weapons of mass destruction that'd hound our nation for time immemorial. In all this, 326 million lives are in the hands of only three Americans. Trump's National Security Advisor is 70-year-old John Bolton. Born

in the U.S., he has never been in the military, having escaped the draft vis-a-vis Vietnam. He's become notorious by his advocacy for war with Iran for at least twenty years. Anyone who knows anything about the Muslim religion and its war with Christianity, dating back to the first Crusade in 1071, recognizes control of Islam's devotees is as easy as a trip to Mars via a Cessna.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is a mystery wrapped in an enigma. He's a 55-year-old who's appreciated advantages in life many an American could envy. He graduated from the U.S. Military Academy and from Harvard University law school to become a lawyer. However, this man is accused of harboring contempt for blacks, gays and Muslims. He's a dedicated hawk. Although he received his first college degree at West Point, and learned the art of war there, he has avoided combat although he's apparently eager to put other Americans in harm's way by warring in Iran.

In his effort to reverse everything done by the Obama Administration, one of President Donald Trump's first acts was to take the U.S. out of the nuclear agreement with Iran, followed by the imposition of heavy sanctions. His actions have caused considerable harm to the Iranian economy. More recently there were the oil tanker incidents in the Strait of Hormuz and the shooting

down of an American a U.S. drone. These actions have led to what appeared imminent war not yet materialized. More Trump sanctions have followed. No one seems to know where Trump's true sentiments lie. The uncertainty with him is his decision-making inclinations, generally understood as based on the last person with whom he spoke. Last week, Republicans in the U.S. Senate gave Trump and his two favorite hawks (Bolton and Pompeo) the power to order military strikes without consulting with or even notifying the U.S. Congress.

Another war anywhere in the world will lead to more lives lost in vain, further depletion of the U.S. treasury, and the return of American military personnel with physical injuries and mental problems like PTSD. Meanwhile, instead of war with Iran, our government, among others allied in the effort, should lead with a plan to implement the brutal lawlessness motivating Guatemalans, Hondurans, Nicaraguans, etc. to seek sanctuary here in the United States.

(Gene H. McIntyre shares his opinion regularly in the *Keizertimes*.)

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